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15 March 1956

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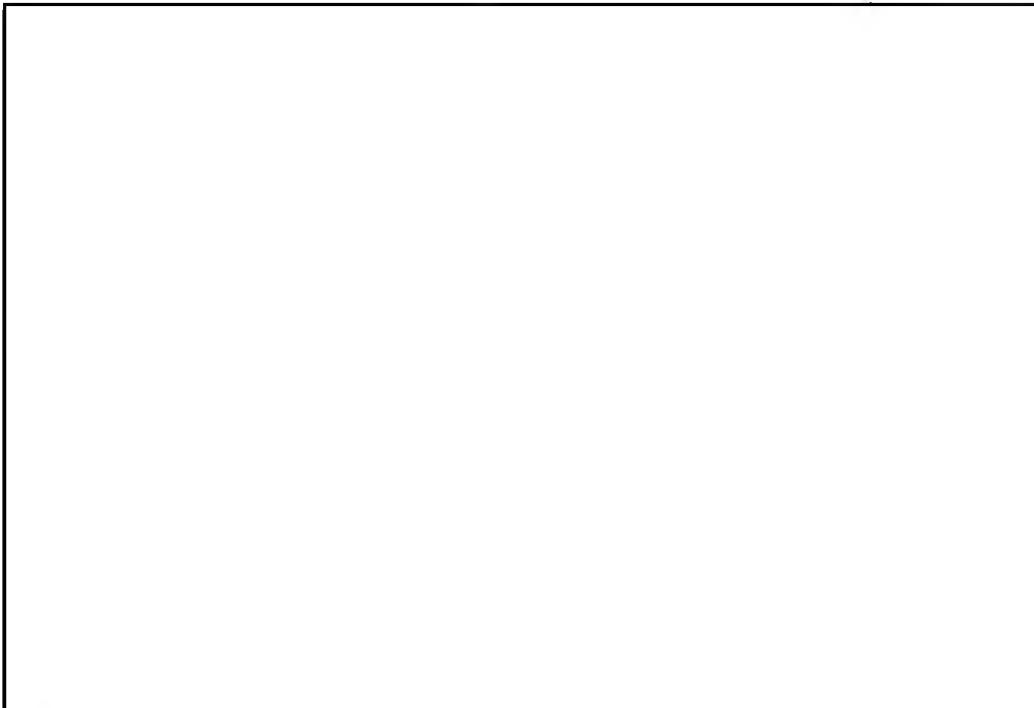
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OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
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**3. NATO BASE AT KEFLAVIK TO BE MAJOR ISSUE IN
ICELANDIC ELECTION**

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The Icelandic Progressive Party's decision to leave the Conservative-Progressive coalition government points to an early summer election in which the status of the US-manned NATO air base at Keflavik would be the major issue. Iceland will in the interim probably be ruled by some form of caretaker government under the present Conservative prime minister.

The Progressive Party, a non-Communist, largely agrarian, party that formerly supported the base, has been led by strong popular sentiment to advocate a revision of the Defense Agreement of 1951 with the United States so that the base can be "manned by Icelanders."

The Progressives hope to form an election alliance with the Social Democrats, who hold similar views on the base. The Communists will try to expand such an alliance into an all-leftist coalition under the aegis of the Icelandic Federation of Labor, which they control.

Growing reluctance of the Conservatives to defend the base before a generally hostile public suggests that their support of the Defense Agreement in an election campaign would be lukewarm at best.

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**6. BRITAIN TO ASSIGN NEW OFFICERS TO
THE ARAB LEGION**

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London will relieve those officers assigned to the Arab Legion to whom Jordan originally objected, but will detail new officers to the Legion, according to a British War

Office official. Approximately the number serving before Glubb's dismissal on 1 March will thus be maintained.

Comment

The British are evidently still examining the possibilities of continuing to maintain some special influence in Jordan, but it is likely that officer replacements would be in advisory rather than command positions. The American embassy in London believes that the British are unlikely to terminate the subsidy for the present.

Despite pressure from Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia, Amman has said it wants to use British officers and retain the annual subsidy.

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25X1A 7. GENERAL STRIKE IN BAHREIN

The general strike now in effect in the Persian Gulf sheikdom of Bahrain is primarily political in motivation, aimed at the local ruler and his British adviser. The strikers are led by the "Higher Executive Committee," a reformist group which is demanding the dismissal of the adviser and the immediate arrest and trial of the "persons responsible" for ordering local police to fire on demonstrators on 11 March, an action which resulted in five deaths. The current flare-up was preceded by mob violence during the visit of British foreign secretary Selwyn Lloyd on 2 March.

The "Higher Executive Committee's" basic demand is that it be recognized as a body which the ruler should consult concerning the government of the sheikdom. The ruler has so far resisted this demand, and appears to be relying on British naval and air force units which were reinforced 12 March.

Foreign employees have maintained the operations of the American-owned Bahrain Petroleum Company. The strike is relatively peaceful, but unless the reform group's demands are met at least in part, further violence seems almost certain.

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